

Officer Report Back
SUA Representative (elected) for Merrill
Kartik Ashok

It was an honor being an elected SUA representative for my affiliated college for the Fall Quarter of 2014. Serving alongside second-years Chandler and Alexandra, I gained valuable experience from my two peers who had already had a year of experience with the SUA. A wide range of issues were discussed and often fiercely debated in the many SUA meetings that I attended, as well as in meetings with the Merrill student government.

The SUA meetings gave me an understanding of the proceedings of student government, where delegated members had the responsibility of debating and voting on the allocation of university funds to a vast array of student organizations and activities. Aside from debating the amount of funding for student activities and organizations, we also debated over the expansion of the amphitheater and the increase in tuition fees; I was curious to see whether SUA might agree to pass a vote of no confidence in the UC regents, just as the SUA's in Berkeley and Los Angeles have. Some of the student activities that were debated were CALPRG, UCSC Hack-a-thon, water conservation organizations, the disc golf team, cultural organizations, and other student activities. Members debated and determined the amount of funding each activity or organization would be allotted. I was aware of the original \$37,000 deficit for the student government, and was pleased that by successfully voting for budget cuts in a democratic manner, the issue of our deficit was entirely eliminated for this academic year. The remaining budget was then used to fund the disc golf team, which is beneficial to the reputation of UCSC because disc golf was originally popularized here in Santa Cruz.

My office hours are at Casa Latina at 5:00PM on Tuesdays.

In the Merrill Student Government meetings on Thursdays, we discussed the proceedings of SUA meetings with our MSG officers, while they, in turn, spoke about their meetings with the different wings of student government that they represent Merrill in. The Merrill student government meetings had much fewer people than the SUA meetings, and were also much more informal, making it easier for me to frequently communicate with the members. CALPRG's water initiative is currently being undertaken by our university in the winter quarter, and was funded last quarter.

One improvement that could be made to the functioning of SUA is reduction of the background chatter that unfortunately occurs during meetings. Also, several amendments to amendments are often made, which slows down the proceedings of student government considerably; whilst it is absolutely essential to have fruitful debates with several amendments, what ends up happening is that the delegates move around the issues in circles rather than moving forward with solving them. A welcome change which was made over halfway through the quarter was the

changing of the meeting time from 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM, which allowed delegates to have dinner at a more convenient time, rather than arriving to meetings and having to wait for a break during which they probably had difficulty in catching a meal.